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Volume 22

Number 2 *The Iowa Homemaker* vol.22, no.2

Article 14

1942

Tin Must S-t-r-e-t-c-h

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Recommended Citation

Plagge, Doris (1942) "Tin Must S-t-r-e-t-c-h," *The Iowa Homemaker*: Vol. 22 : No. 2 , Article 14.

Available at: <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol22/iss2/14>

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Tin Must

S-t-r-e-t-c-h

SHELVES of canned foods in the 1942 home will take on a different appearance from previous years. Not only will they be unusually well supplied with produce from home gardens but the canned foods from the grocer will show a transition from tin cans to glass jars, or from tin containers to paper bags or boxes. Sizes of cans, too, are changed; most canning is now being done in large can sizes, so the consumer will be making adjustments in her buying and menu-planning habits.

In the past, the canning industry has been the principal customer for the manufacturers of tin plate, consuming 60 percent of all tin. Present government needs, however, for Army, Navy and Lend-lease food programs as well as the defense industries, will cut consumption of tin for canning from 40,000 tons to 24,500 tons in 1942.

Although this would appear to be the making of a tin shortage, the needs of the domestic industries have not been forgotten. The government has taken several steps to alleviate a scarcity of this now precious metal. First, by assigning a higher priority rating, construction of new smelters in Texas for refining Bolivian ore has been speeded up. Several steel companies have announced the installation of new electrolytic tin-plating equipment. The second step has been the release of the long-awaited Tin Can Restrictions Order of the WPB.

Under the act, products are classified into primary and secondary groups, meaning unlimited or limited production. A certain group of staples is classified under prohibited production. These staples include coffee, dog food, pork and beans, tobacco, petroleum products, cereals, spices and certain canned soups. In



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the future this class of products will probably be packed in paper or cardboard containers, glass jars or bottles or any one of several types of tin-plated cans now being developed.

The order also restricts can sizes so that next fall the homemaker can expect to find less variety of size on the grocers' shelves. The reason for the restricted sizes is principally one of economy: a No. 10 can takes the same amount of food as four smaller cans and requires less tin. The limitations may reduce the number of sizes to as few as 30 or 35 different sizes.

Cans themselves will be slightly different in composition. The present process is to dip the sheet metal into molten tin, following the dipping with rolling to the desired thinness. A new process, more economical in its use of tin, is an electrolytic process by which the steel is coated with a thinner layer of tin, still sufficiently thick for safe food preservation. This process makes a possible saving of two-thirds of the tin required for the old method of dipping.

A second way to reduce the consumption of tin will be the use of terneplate, sheet steel coated with an alloy of one part tin to four parts lead. The possibility of food poisoning makes this a less desirable type of can for food pack, so the use of this material may be limited to dry packs and to various non-food products on the tin taboo list.

Although the restrictions of the Tin Can Order were put into effect March 1, the homemaker will not see the effects of them in her buying until next fall, after this year's canning season has been completed. The stocks now in the stores are said to be sufficient to carry through the summer.

—Doris Plagge

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